Halide Edib in Hampstead: Representations of the Occupier and the Host

> Halide Edib's other [son] is now at the school of economics in London, where his mother has been living since 1924, an exile among the same British whose soldiers hunted her in 1920 as she escaped from Constantinople hidden under charcoal bags on an oxcart guided by Anatolian irregulars. A few days before she left for New York a visitor saw her in her flat in Hampstead section of London. Instead of the traditional texts from the Koran- embroiderings in gold thread on green velvet […] there were such soundly Victorian pictures on her walls as adorn thousands of other London flats. Instead of the Turkish coffee and sweets which form part of the refreshment usually offered to visitors in Turkey, there were tea and toasted scones. (Price, Claire. 'A Woman Speaks for the New Turkey', *New York Times*, 29 July 1928)

So describes Price Halide Edib's[1] home in Hampstead in the New York Times, a newspaper in which she had appeared many times before, including in a piece in which she was profiled along with Gertrude Bell under the title 'Two Women Contend for a New Eden in the East' (7 Feb 1926). The above description of Halide neatly encapsulates her relationship with England and the English- once on the run from them, now having established her literary headquarters there. Halide read, lectured, conferred, bought her first typewriter and wrote in London; it was the locus of a frenzy of literary activity that would make her something of a political and literary representative of Turkey to the world. During time in London she also became a part of a kind of international republic of letters,[2] became a member of PEN, and formed long-standing friendships there. Halide Edib's interviews and letters suggest that she herself did not find her situation in London ironic; she saw herself more in a lineage of writers who fought for the sovereignty of their nations and opposed oppression, and who made London their home. It was in fact Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who, speaking to the British representative in Turkey, Reginald Hoare, said he found it ironic that Halide Edib who had 'always wanted to harm England' was now sheltered by the very same country, with the rather cavalier aside that Halide was the embodiment of Jewish threat in Turkey (Çalışlar, 2010: 344). Atatürk's conversation with Mr. Hoare reminds us to consider the 'enemies to allies' framework as consisting of two registers: the one between the states, British and Turkish, the other between individuals, Halide Edib and her literary circle. The categories of state, individual, citizen, occupier and host play a great role in the way we conceive of enemies and

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[1] Halide Edib assumed the surname of her husband Adnan, which is Adıvar, after the law about surnames was instated in Turkey in 1934, quite late into her career. So while some publications may refer to Halide Edib as Adıvar, I keep Halide Edib as her full name, as this was the name she published under most of the Works I discuss here. Adıvar means 'has a name', and Adnan, finding the surname law absurd, is supposed to have adopted it to make a point about already having a name.

[2] Halide Edib and her husband Adnan Adıvar saw themselves as belonging to this republic of the mind. Adnan Adıvar would later publish his essays on members of this 'republic' that they met through their travels and extended stays in England and Europe under the title *Bilgi Cumhuriyeti Haberleri*. Tasvir Neşriyatı, 1945

allies- categories that shifted and overlapped during Halide's lifetime, and indeed keep shifting today.

Although I understand that the relationship between England and Turkey never became a colonial one, Halide's vision of the English, as we shall see, is often refracted through an understanding of colonial relations and the example of India is ever present in her mind. Accordingly, I want to share two quotes from Richard and Janis Haswell's *Hospitality and Authoring* (2010), as both concepts are crucial in understanding Halide's relationship to England and how she presented it in her writing. Haswell and Haswell use Jacques Derrida and Mireille Rosello's ideas to expound on the conditions under which the roles of host and guest can change:

> Under the political, military, economic, and missionary drive of European expansion, strangers arriving in foreign lands began relationships as guests but quickly commandeered the role of host. The arrivant became an invader, occupier or colonizer (Derrida 1993, 34) - often all three […] Colonial hospitality betrays ethical hospitality not because the role of host and guest are inverted but because there is no reciprocal exchange or equitable redefinition of roles as the new host devours and cannibalizes the natives, who were once hosts but now are perpetual and powerless guests in their own land (Rosello 2001, 28-30) (Haswell and Haswell, 2015:21)

Haswell and Haswell take this occupier-host analogy further to say something intrinsic to the act of writing and reading, implying that as readers, we are all potential occupiers: 'One perversion of the writer-as-host and reader-as-guest inversion, when the guest invades the text and takes control of it as host. This is what we mean by colonial criticism' (Haswell and Haswell, 67). Halide Edib found herself in different positions in this occupier, host and guest matrix in her relations with England, and she put her experiences in writing in different genres: fiction, memoir, letters and journalism.

Halide Edib's relationship with England started well before the establishment of the Turkish Republic. She was brought up, her biographer İpek Çalışlar tells us, according to British notions of children's education picked up from magazines and books by her father who worked at the Palace. After a rigorous education in English at the American College for girls- an education that was interrupted because Abdulhamid II did not like the idea of one of his administrative staff's daughter being under such influence- she started writing pieces for newspapers. She also sent articles and letters to publications in the English-speaking world, which led to her first visit to England in 1909. She was invited by Isobel Fry, who had read her article on women in the Ottoman Empire, commissioned by the then Nation magazine (New Statesman). The invitation had been very welcome as Halide was already in exile in Egypt at the time, having become a target during the 31st March events due to her progressive views.

There is no record of Halide writing about her experiences in England during her visit, when she instead seems to have been working on her novel *Seviye Talip* about a failing marriage, which she published in 1910. Following *Seviye Talip,* back in Istanbul she divorced her husband Zeki Salih, and started signing her work Halide Edib rather than Halide Salih. She then wrote a second novel about failing marriages,

Handan (1912) this time with a European background, with women nursing their depression in various European countries. There are scenes in London, but almost no English characters to speak of, or any comment on the setting- England is a stage for Halide Edib to fictionalize her coming to terms with the end of her marriage.

Halide Edib would write about her experiences in England decades later, in a series of articles entitled 'England and the English' in 1939, in the Akşam newspaper,[3] including one in which she gives a damning account of the Anglo-Indians she had to travel with in the ship she took from Port Said. Her own governess in Istanbul – about whom more later- had been an Anglo-Indian who had in fact suggested that she marry her brother in India. Halide Edib's newspaper pieces on England are an amalgam of her experiences of 1909 and her sojourn in the 1920's, written retrospectively in the 30's, so it is difficult to fathom what her initial, un-reworked impression was like. In the 1939 Akşam pieces she gives an account of the violent tactics used by the suffragettes, and also provides a very funny anecdote of her first meeting with Bertrand Russell who would become an intellectual ally for her and her second husband in years to come. When she enters his room, 'this famous Orientalist', she says, starts speaking to her in a language she cannot understand. When questioned, he says that he is speaking a Turkish he has learnt from books, a language he has never heard spoken. ('Oxford', *Akşam*, 7 Temmuz 1939)

Halide's first extended representations of the English appear in 1922, in her serialized novel *Ateşten Gömlek* (The Shirt of Flame), describing the conditions in occupied Istanbul.[4] The book was translated into English in 1924 in New York, which popularized her as a representative of the Turkish plight with the American media and led to her appearances in the New York Times. When *Ateşten Gömlek* was serialized, Istanbul was still under British occupation and Halide had made a name for herself as a distinguished member of the Turkish resistance by drawing tens of thousands of Istanbulites to Sultanahmet Square on 15th May 1919 to protest the occupation of Izmir by the Greek army. Halide Edib was hunted by the British police in Istanbul and fled to Ankara. Written during the very years of the occupation in 1922, from Anatolia, and with the licence that fiction affords, *Ateşten Gömlek* is damning both of the British forces *and* the Istanbul ladies who tried to appease them.

The book opens with a scene in which the English are bombing the Foreign Office in Istanbul. The heroine Ayşe, who seems to be a stand in for Halide Edib, is an İzmir evacuee. She goes to the Sultanahmet meeting, and the male narrator, necessarily in love with her, repeats the actual slogan of the banner draped on the podium that

[3] She writes a series of 15 opinion pieces. By the time the series ends, WWII breaks out and she writes a couple of op-eds about Germany as well.

[4] It is worth noting that Halide Edib borrowed the name of the novel from Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who had told her he meant to write the story of the Anatolian resistance under that title. Karaosmanoğlu chose, instead, to write a novel called *Yaban* (1932), not about the resistance, but a story of alienation that takes place in an Anatolian village that is actually indifferent to the resistance. His own account of Istanbul's occupation years, on the other hand, was called *Sodom ve Gomore* (1928) in which he was much more damning of the British compared to Halide Edib.

Halide Edib had spoken from: 'Governments our enemies, nations our friends' (31)[5] The narrator explains how one of the *salon* ladies tries to recruit Ayşe to the cause of 'explaining ourselves to the British'. Ayşe is too honourable to do that willingly, and yet finds herself in the company of a British journalist called Mister Cook, observed by the narrator as follows:

> I still remember it with pain and revolt. He sits there as if he is the only person in the room. You could make out the shapes of his long, skeletal legs under his trousers, and he kept shaking his long feet. His head, with thinning hair, looked like an old bird of prey that had lost its feathers. His big nose was aggressive and in the air, his small blue eyes gazing around him without feeling. […] Arrogant, full of himself, mocking, his victory gone to his head- he was the lowliest and most ignorant embodiment of the colonial despot of the English who treads forcefully on the people of a country whom he calls the natives of the colonies. (36)

Mr. Cooke is clearly modelled after the Anglo-Indians Halide had met and disliked on her trip to England, and is the embodiment of the occupier that presumes the role of the host, looking like a bird of prey ready to 'cannibalize the natives' in the words of Haswell and Haswell. While the narrator is scandalized by Mr. Cooke's manners, the hostess who is trying to make a good impression, a hostess the narrator describes as 'trying to live by the edicts of Ali Kemal Bey' (21) – yes that Ali Kemal, great grandfather of Boris Johnson- tries to convince Mr. Cooke that it was the Party of Union of Progress that led Turkey into war, and that Istanbul wants to be allies with England. To which Mr Cook replies in bad French, as it is the European language that the Turks would have been most fluent in at the time:

> Yes, you must want English protection, all of you. Look at India, how happy she is. They thank God and pray for the continuance of white man's rule over them. But I do not know if England will accept this difficult task. Is there any other way out for you? We have to remember the sixty thousand Englishmen you killed in Çanakkale. If you repent sincerely, maybe England will forgive. (38)

Here, Halide Edib paints Mr. Cook as the British occupier who tries the same 'reading' strategy on India and Turkey. Ayşe, provoked by Mr. Cook's arrogance accuses the British of facilitating the Greek occupation of Izmir, and says that it is the British who need to apologize, in perfect French. Thus, the character of Mr. Cook as the despicable, almost caricaturized colonial officer allows Halide Edib to criticize colonialist discourse. The Indian theme continues when Halide Edib describes Ayşe's anger when her house is requisitioned by the British: she feels violated and writes to the narrator 'The English troops walked about in the streets, what a day of shame and denigration' (58-59) she says and then inserts a story about an Indian without clear indication as to where she heard it from: 'Dear god! The English had made an Indian man walk on all fours on the ground like an animal because he insulted an English woman. Will not our army want to punish the men who are jealous of the majesty of a

[5] Page numbers are from Halide Edib Adıvar. *Ateşten Gömlek*. Özgür: İstanbul, 1997. Translations are mine.

Turkish woman, who tread on her, with the same passion? Does not the army think of insulting its women like an insult against the flag?' leaving no doubt as to what women's bodies represent during wars and national struggles.

India would be one of the places she would visit, in 1924, as an international woman of diplomacy and letters. Her nationalist rhetoric in *Ateşten Gömlek* in particular struck a cord with the nationalist movement there. In India the book was published under the title of *Daughter of Smyrna*, in 1940's, and as the frontispiece says, it was 'rendered into English by Muhammad Yakub Han, Editor 'The Light', Lahore, India'[6] with an introduction by the translator:

> Needless to add that I venture to present to the public this English version of the patriotic fervor, sufferings and sacrifices of our Turkish brothers and sisters in the cause of national freedom and national honour in the hope that it may kindle something of the noble spark in the bosoms of the sons and daughters of India which is just now passing through the travail of rebirth.

It is also no surprise that when Halide Edib sets out to write about her experiences about India (published in London in 1937), the reasons she gives for her attempt in the preface are entangled with England:

> It has been a rule of life with me not to write anything about a country not my own beyond personal impressions, and that very rarely. I have not made an exception to this rule even in the case of England, a people I have known since very early life, a country where I have lived for more than four years, not counting the numerous visits made at different periods. I break the rule in writing *Inside India*.[7]

In various places in the book she recognizes the similarities between India and Turkey, which effects her relationship with the India and Indians and also explains why she was welcomed so whole-heartedly and seen as a harbinger of good news for nationalist struggles. She 'breaks her rule' for India in the knowledge that, writing as a 'friend', her observations will be welcome. India and England remain test cases for each other as she formulates her own views of the behaviour of occupier, guest and host. Indeed, as she remembers her first impressions of India in this preface, she is also speaking about her first impressions of the English: as occupiers in India. In her foundational memories, the two countries are inextricably linked:

> Next came the English governess who told me about the India of forty years ago. She had been the wife of an English tea-planter and spent thirty years of her life in the country […] India had become the playground of an imperialist

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[6] The details of the publication are given as follows: 'Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore, India. Darul Kutub Islamia. Ripon Printing Press, Bull Road, Lahore. Second edition' It bears no date, but both the catalogue of the Boğaziçi University where I accessed it, and google books has the publication date as '194-' It's a very free translation indeed, but that is the subject of another paper. For futher commentary on her visit to India and its influence on her audience see Mushirul Hassan's *Between Modernity and Nationalism: Halide Edib's Encounter with Ghandi's India* (2010)

[7] Halide Edib. *Inside India*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd: London, 1937

> race. They ruled as Olympian gods. They rode elephants, they hunted tigers and all the wild beasts of the jungle. The humblest among them loomed across the scene as all-powerful as a Chingiz Khan […] The white men, according to my governess, had extraordinary backbone.

This preface is the closest Halide Edib comes to acknowledging the influence that England has had on her in her writing. In her newspaper pieces she relates information about England quite dispassionately, without letting on as to how her experiences there have affected her. Seeing that *Inside India* was published in 1937, we can conclude that she wrote the above lines sometime in 1936. It looks like that Halide Edib had to break her rule about speaking about other countries again in a couple of years - though not quite to the same extent- by writing 15 columns for Akşam newspapers entitled 'England and the English', in 1939.

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After the publication of *Ateşten Gömlek*, the fighting in Anatolia, and the establishment of a new capital and parliament in Ankara, Halide Edib found herself in Vienna in 1926 with her husband Adnan Adıvar, where they had gone for her treatment, unable to return to Turkey. Adnan Adıvar was an MP for the Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (Progressive Republican Party), the first opposition party in Turkey, and a state of emergency had been declared in Turkey that put the liberty of MPs in danger. The state of emergency had been declared to suppress a religiously motivated Kurdish rebellion in the south, which would lead to the infamous İstiklal Mahkemeleri in which people were tried, invariably found guilty of treason and executed. It became clear that Ankara would be a dangerous place for politicians who did not see completely eye to eye with Mustafa Kemal, and so Halide Edib and Adnan Adıvar, who was a doctor by profession, decided to move on to London to see this period through, despite the fact that Adıvar, though fluent in French, did not speak English and this made it impossible for him to practice medicine. They had chosen to settle in the UK, possibly due to the fact that Halide Edib had friends there and a milieu in which she could continue writing and publishing in English.

Halide and Adnan first set up house in the Chiltern Hills across from Isobel Fry's school and it is also here that Halide got her first typewriter, wrote the first part of her memoirs *Memoirs of Halide Edib* (published in Turkish in 1963 as *Mor Salkımlı Ev*), in which she chronicles her life up until her return from Syria in 1918. Through Fry, Halide Edib met a few people of the world of letters during her stay, including Arnold Toynbee and Bertrand Russell. While still in the Chilterns, they would meet with students in Fry's home and read passages from classical works in the evenings, and in one of her newspaper columns in 1939, Halide Edib remarked that she never witnessed them reading from the Bible, and that Darwin's grandson was among the people who had visited the school ('Köy ve Komşular' (Village and Neighbours), 24th August 1939). From the Chilterns, they moved to Hampstead, South Hill Park Gardens.

During this second, longer stay, Halide Edib, in keeping with her claim in the preface to *Inside India*, again does not write about England. That is, she doesn't *publish* anything, but Çalışlar has accessed some of her letters at the time, which reveal that her relationship with England and the English is one founded very firmly in the

republic of letters. Her assessment of people is determined by whether they view a writer similarly, or how they regard political ideologies such as democracy and socialism, national rivalries barely make an appearance. She seems aware of the tacit contract between the host and the guest. When, later, in her 1939 column she is giving an account of her landlady, she says the landlady's mother had also been a writer, and remarks that she did not lock up the library in the common area they used. Access to books and a literary milieu is the one thing that makes London home for her. With the help of this unnamed novelist landlady Halide Edib finds a cleaner, who she later learns, had been a militant Labour member, and that she worked for Halide Edib only to be able to contribute more money to the party. Mrs. Simpson was her alias, and Halide Edib was so impressed with her that she wrote a column about her in her 1939 series.

Halide Edib must have felt thoroughly at ease in Hampstead because she writes to her American friend Florence Billings, and tells her to come and stay with her in London to use the libraries, as Billings was working on the Near East question at the time. I quote the letter from Çalışlar's excellent biography:

> I live in Hampstead, in a semi-ground floor apartment. The rooms at the back have a magnificent view, there is a lake, there are trees, when the sun sets the towers behind the trees look like minarets and the swans of the queen make funny circles in its dark shadows. If you should want to stay with us, I even have a small room that looks over to the lake that I can turn into a bedroom for you.[8] (Çalışlar 2010: 331)

Exile does not embitter Halide, and she is able to find joy in the scenery, able to connect London's architecture to Istanbul without any wistfulness. Nowhere in her writing does she express a strong longing to go back home- she seems aware that things in Ankara need to run their own course and that she will return when the time is right. However, maybe she's projecting her longing on to her husband whose state of mind she describes as follows: 'In this place where those who were called 'the parliament gang' were burnt, Adnan's soul, too, is burning in fire'.[9] (Çalışlar 2010: 331) It seems being a political dissident comes with the very territory of Hampstead, where she and her husband in a way commune with the souls of the rebels who were loyal to the English Parliament during the Civil War. Çalışlar says that the speakers in Hampstead Heath impressed Halide, that she thought that they were even more passionate than the speakers in Hyde Park. So now England, and its parliamentarian memories would play host both physically and spiritually, connecting Halide and Adnan to people who had once been branded traitor in Hampstead. To give a better sense of their living conditions in London, Çalışlar resorts to biographies of Halide Edib's friends such as Rauf Orbay, who was an MP in exile like Adnan:

> We had all known the difficulties of the world war and the struggle for independence […] We did not think anything of having to go with one meal a day. Thankfully none of us had addictions such as smoking, alcohol or fashion.

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[8] Letter dated 5th November 1926.

[9] Fire was a frequent metaphor in Halide's work: the name she chose for her memoir *The Turkish Ordeal* when she published a revised version in Turkish in the 1962 was *Turks' Trial by Fire*.

> I did not want to disturb them in their one and a half room apartment and so found myself a clean attic room, the sort to be found in all small or big English hotels. We passed our spare time listening to concerts in Hyde Park (Çalışlar 2010: 339)

During this second, longer stay, Halide Edib met again with Bertrand Russell whom she found thoroughly obsessed with the Russian revolution. She also met with other liberals and observed that individual freedoms were paramount for them. In them, she found champions for the values that she had been exiled from Turkey for. She started working for PEN where she had the opportunity to meet many writers.

Halide spent time with Arnold Toynbee, whom she had met during his time in Turkey as a reporter for the Manchester Guardian. Toynbee had also been on the commission that produced the Blue Book on the Armenian deportations and in that sense he is a figure to be considered in the 'enemies to allies' framework in his own right. In his book *Acquaintances*, he has a chapter entitled 'Some Turkish Friends' in which he talks about his own complex relationship with Turkey and paints an interesting picture of Halide Edib, Adnan Adıvar and Rauf Orbay. Toynbee was also aware of Halide and Adnan's ironic situation, her relationship with England gets inscribed in the English world of letters:

> Adnan and Halide paid for their patriotism by being driven into exile- not by their country's adversaries at the time […] They were exiled, after the national crisis was over, by the national leader who had saved Turkey with the aid of comrades of the Adivar's disinterested kind. When Atatürk's death made it possible for the Adivars to come back home, they assumed their natural vocations, which were scholarly. Halide had made her name early as a novelist and she now became professor of English at the University of Istanbul, while Adnan took a leading part in the production of the Turkish version of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (232)

Toynbee was also touched and impressed by the kind of relationship they still had with the efforts of the new republic although they had practically been declared enemies of the state:

> Atatürk had succumbed to a dictator's occupational infirmity of being unable to co-operate with his equals, and the exiles were paying the price for this. Each of them had as good a right as Dante had had to sign himself *exul immeritus*. […] Atatürk was flagrantly at fault, but he was still the saviour of his and his victim's country […] In this difficult moral situation, my Turkish friends in exile showed good judgment and admirable generosity. Their comments on Atatürk's acts were frank but discriminating and objective (238)

It was clear that in London, Halide Edib had found many allies, and must have felt vindicated about her dissension. She was able to observe many political and intellectual practices she would go on to praise in her columns in 1939 when she went back to Turkey. She seems often to have been interviewed, and what is interesting is she never identified herself as an exile, and, as Toynbee observed, refrained from harsh accusations against the Ankara government and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in particular. Although she admitted that Atatürk had despotic tendencies, she always

coupled this observation with a statement that he had done a lot of good for the country, including progress in women's rights, particularly in the New York Times interview I have quoted earlier.

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Halide Edib's second representation of the English for public consumption would come with the second part of her memoirs, *The Turkish Ordeal*, detailing the conditions of the British occupation of Istanbul *and* the war of independence in Anatolia. Having already given an account of this in fiction, Halide Edib seems to have been moved to write a 'factual' version of events after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's *Nutuk* in 1927, a five day address to the Republican Party in which he accuses Halide Edib of supporting the idea of an American mandate– an accusation that still colour the Turkish public's understanding of her today. Halide Edib must have felt she had to set the record straight, and in any case, there was a great demand by the international public to hear her side of the story. So she set to writing her memories of the British occupation of Istanbul while in London, and it was published in 1928.[10]

The Turkish Ordeal starts with the mood in Istanbul during the British occupation, and how the British tried to hunt Halide Edib down as she tried to make her way to Anatolia to join the parliament that was to be established there:

> The requisitioning of the houses, the throwing out of the inhabitants without allowing them to take their personal belongings – those were the mildest forms of bad treatment. The Greek and Armenian interpreters and assistants of the Allied police – the English particularly – greatly influenced and colored the behavior of these men toward the Turks.

The requisitioning of the houses, which she also dramatizes in *Ateşten Gömlek*, is a manifestation of how, again following Haswell and Haswell's argument, the arrivant becomes the invader, the occupier morphs into the colonizer. Leaving the locals homeless is the perversion of the colonial order. Here the allied police show their colours as enemies she says that proper communication with the British seems more and more impossible:

> I confess I felt embarrassed, for I had decided to have nothing to do with the English authorities, and I knew that they hated me like poison; but I decided with some difficulty to go and see Colonel Heathcote Smythe in Roumeli Hissar. […] The moment for a milder and more humane British attitude toward the Turks had passed since I had seen Colonel Heathcote Smythe last. The British headquarters was actually wishing for a violent and bloody fray between the Turks and the Christians, according to those reports, and so of course it was to their advantage to let us throttle each other so that they could be given a pretext to occupy Istamboul in the name of peace. (14)

When Halide and Adnan get word that the English will close the Ottoman parliament the next day, 16th March 1920, they get into an argument about what to do. Adnan

[10] http://louisville.edu/a-s/history/turks/Turkish%20Ordeal.pdf [Accessed 22 June 2017]

wants to be there when the English soldiers come, Halide believes it is their duty not to be arrested but to go join forces with Mustafa Kemal Ankara. Adnan makes a reference to the Sultanahmet meetings slogan to try to convince her:

> 'Haven't you yourself been urging that the peoples are our friends and governments our enemies? Let the peoples – let the English people – see to it that their government, the oldest parliamentary government in existence, does not do injustice to a representative institution." I suddenly had a vision of old Roman senators sitting tight in their seats while Rome was being taken by strangers. (15)

Adnan seems here to be parroting Halide Edib's own views about the symbolism British Parliament about which she would write at length in her final assessment of the British psyche. Despite the treatment they get from the British police, Adnan, and as obliquely referred to here Halide, the Turkish and British people, believe that in their respect for the representative system, should be able to understand one another. This trust in the British people's sense of justice will colour her columns about the 'English' as she calls them (and as they are still widely known in Turkey) when she returns in 1939. Indeed, while the British Army as a whole is a force threatening mayhem, she still has the capacity for sympathy for the individual soldier. The following is the description one of those soldiers that she sees as she's fleeing to Ankara:

> One English soldier stood under a big tree scanning the road, his face very tired; behind him on a little raised earth terrace were three others. They were flashing signals with a heliograph. I leaned out of the carriage and watched them with interest. The man on the road aroused my pity. How pale and yellow and miserable he looked – surely the poor fellow must have had malaria. I had no ill-feeling, no grudge against him. If I was a victim in the form a hunted fox, the poor thing was a victim in the form of a persecutor who evidently did not enjoy his job. How he must have longed to be home! (61)

We do not get such a humanizing account in the novel *Ateşten Gömlek*, but then, in the *Ateşten Gömlek* the English are described through the eyes of a woman who has – unlike Halide- lost a husband and a child in the war, in a novel that was serialized while the War of Independence was on-going. It is also worth noting that the above passage is written in a peaceful flat in Hampstead, after Halide Edib has had opportunity to spend time with British intellectuals and has had to revise her understanding of her relationship with Ankara.

While it is the English that have deprived Turkey of its territories, it is still England's publishers that can make its story known to the world. And although she is critical of the 'propaganda women' of the salons trying to convince the English to be more generous towards the Turks in *Ateşten Gömlek*, in writing *The Turkish Ordeal* she finds herself in the same role. In the memoir itself she downplays the possibility of censure she would face if she wrote it in Turkish and published it in Turkey. However, it is telling that she speaks of her decision to write the memoir right after she describes a scene in which she observes Mustafa Kemal's dictatorial tendencies:

> I would try to tell the story of Turkey as simply and honestly as a child, that the world might some day read it – not as a historical record nor as a political treatise, but as a human document about men and women alive during my own lifetime; and I would write it in a language far better fitted to reach the world than my own. It was that very night, as I lay in bed after the scene with Mustafa Kemal Pasha, that I determined to write my Memoirs and to write them in English. The independent Turkish nation will share its ordeal with many independent nations of the world. (132)

It is indeed the English language that allows her to give interviews in the American press, and also make friends in India who see her as the embodiment of the Turkish struggle for independence which is to be a model for the subcontinent.

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After travelling to the US and India, and setting up home in Paris once again, finally, after the death of Atatürk, in 1939, Halide Edib returns to Turkey in a period when England and Turkey become official allies in the 1939 treaty signed after Italy invades Albania. Hot on her heels, it seems, Halide was commissioned by Akşam Newspaper to write a series of columns to familiarize Turkish readers with this new ally. Halide's exile years were to be mined for information about the English. Akşam announced the series as follows:

> We do not know our friends the English. Our people consider them to be loyal to their strange and incomprehensible customs and traditions. The French and the Germans, for instance, are explained well and yet the English have not been described, as they deserve to be. Two noble nations that have tied their fates together need to get to know one another much better. The great Turkish writer Halide Edib who knows England, the English and the English language like an English (person), will share her observations in Akşam Newspaper.

Echoing her introduction to *Inside India*, Halide Edib responds to this accolade by saying she can never get an understanding of England as one of its native-borns, but adds that there may be advantages to this outsider position. She is a bit more cautious than the editor about the new ties of fate that Turkey and UK have:

> I do not know if we are shoulder-buddies or fellow travellers, or whatever, but I believe we need to know them in any case. That is why I want to share what I know about England and the English with my fellow citizens. […] Thirty years ago, when the state of England was for the regressive forces in Turkey, the intellectuals of England wanted to get in touch with progressive writers in Turkey whose views they had read in the Turkish papers. And I went to England on the invitation of one of their number. ('Manş Denizini Geçerken' (Crossing the Channel), *Akşam*, 10 June 1939)

After this introduction, Halide Edib writes 15 columns under the heading 'England and the English', talking at length about the parliamentarian system, the whips, the suffragettes, the Victorian period, the English dislike for radicalism and revolution, how the school system keeps the classes apart, lack of a constitution. She explains the cultural background of phrases like 'getting one's money's worth', and 'an

Englishman's home is his castle', 'a cup of tea ma'am'. She says that understanding how a nation's parliamentarian system has developed is the best way to understand that nation's psyche ('Parlamento ve Azaları' (Parliament and Its Members), *Akşam*, 3 August 1939). Writing about the 1832 land reform, Halide says that it's a typical manifestation of the English measure for preventing revolution:

> English is a creature that is much attached to reality. He changes his position, even his view according to need and necessity. One can say that there is no other nation that has applied the principle of Islamic law – which usually just stays in theory- that says 'The judgements change with the change of time' ('Parlamento ve Azaları' (Parliament and Its Members), *Akşam*, 3 August 1939)

Though her tone is suitably conversational for a newspaper, Halide Edib's insights into the workings of the British political system are quite remarkable. It seems clear that while she was writing her memoir about the occupation of Istanbul and Anatolian warfare, she was also equally alert to the intellectual and political environment around her in London. In a vein that has started with Mehmet Akif Ersoy and continues today, Halide Edib also recognizes a good quality in the 'West' and treats is as a quality that exists and is neglected in the Islamic world. This is one of the rare instances in which she engages in comparison between the two civilizations in her England pieces- in which she never once mentions the occupation.

In her 5th piece entitled 'İnsan ve Zihniyet Portresi' (A Portrait of Man and Mentality), Halide Edib talks at length about Henry Nevinson, whom she recognizes as an important ideological ally. For her, he symbolizes a sort of English dissident that still stays within the establishment and is able to contribute to the intellectual life of the country- a model she no doubt wanted to be replicated in Turkey:

> In some people, the need to rebel against oppression becomes stronger particularly when it clashes with pressure from their milieu. Nevinson was one of these people. What was English in him was that he did not fasten this instinct to an ideology or to the Labour Party, which was in its nascent period at the time. Fundamentally, he was using the right of an ordinary Englishman to voice their opinions in a given field. And what was particularly English about the situation was that despite the fact that there were many men who thought, spoke and fought the war of opinions in England, England managed its social evolution without revolution. For- you may chose to attribute this to him not wanting to rock the boat, or his conservatism- the Englishman doesn't like Radicalism. An MP and journalist by the name of Aubray [sic] Herbert who had been inimical to the Turks at the start of the war, but supported the Turkish side towards its end cites the British instinct against radicalism as one of the reasons why they were so much against the young Turk revolution. ('İnsan ve Zihniyet Portresi', *Akşam*, 27 June 1939)

In Nevinson as well, she identifies individualism as the most prominent characteristic of the English intellectual. It seems to her that 'the war of opinions' is one that is freely and legitimately engaged in, which strengthens rather than weakens the establishment. She brings in Herbert to point to Young Turks' radical approach, which translated into autocratic (cultural) reforms and governing style after the establishment of the republic. Thus, praising the English method, becomes an ersatz

way of criticizing the radicalism that still seemed to be part of the republican project in the 1930s.

As she's trying to define the 'English' for her Turkish readers, Halide Edib is well aware that the characters that she's talking about may well object to being held up for scrutiny as specimen of a species. The drive for individualism in the Englishman is so strong, in fact, that some of them don't even want to be associated with England- and *that*, Halide Edib says, is the real mark of the English intellectual:

> The guest who came after dinner was someone altogether different: painter and art critic Roger Fry. I had seen his pictures on the walls of the room because he was the brother of my hostess […] R Fry was a prime example of the English intellectual type that objected to things that were particularly English in everything, and not just to do with things related to the Victorian period. It was clear he liked France better than England. (27 June)

This liking France better than one's own country would have been a familiar trait in intellectuals for the Turkish public. In a Turkey that was still trying to turkify the citizenry, Halide Edib elaborates at length on the English understanding of civilization, and how the English have developed the understanding that what takes society forward is synthesis. She comes to this conclusion particularly in her piece on Oxford, trying to understand how such a stratified, class differentiated education system can still produce a sense of unity. As elsewhere in the series, she doesn't draw direct parallels with the Turkish system but the very words she uses, such as 'vahdet' (unity), seem to reference the law *Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu* (1924), which, on the face of it, was an attempt to standardize education in Turkey, but in reality to ensure the secularization of the classroom. Again, talking about the unity in diversity in English education and social life in general, Halide Edib is pointing a way out of standardized, republican way of life without compromising the integrity of the Turkish state or society:

> Despite the disparity in education, the English, as a nation, display a unity and harmony in their national characteristics […] An outside observer won't fail to notice that the English is a very mixed nation. For the English, civilization is a synthesis. According to the English, the unity in a nation is possible only through securing the harmony between the various powers, capabilities and opinions to be found in its entirety. Working and living together provides the unity and variety, and is as such the most suitable and highest system of living for the English. For he conceives of civilization in combinations: he believes that uniformity would lead a nation to a primitive state, that the primitive and the simple will lose out to the combined and complex. ('Oxford', 7th July 1939)

While much is revealed about the inner workings of British society in these pieces, British foreign policy is conspicuous in its absence, particularly when you consider that these pieces were appearing next to news about Ribbentorp and troop movements in Poland, right before the war broke out. It is clear from the other pieces in the Akşam paper, with the treaty signed, that Britain and Turkey will be on the same side of this impending war. While on the state and national level this may point to a transformation in the Turkish and British relations, from enemies to allies, as I have been trying to argue, Halide Edib's ideological relationship with England remains essentially the same. The British parliamentarian tradition, which takes quite a lot of

space in her series, remains an ideal for her from the very start of her own political and literary career. When in *The Turkish Ordeal* she's recounting the critical moment of confrontation between the two countries, the night that the British are preparing to disband the Ottoman Parliament in 1920, it is again through a reference to the British Parliamentarian system that she censures the acts of the British army.

Halide's ultimate engagement, or alliance with the British came in 1940, when she was given the job to found the department of English Philology at the University of Istanbul. Within that capacity she wrote a history of English literature in Turkish, and translated the plays of Shakespeare with her students. One of the fruits of this exercise seems to have been her own play *Maske ve Ruh* (1945),[11] with scenes alternating between the earth and a celestial world in a future in which humans are working to 'mechanize' themselves. She calls in historical figures such as Nasreddin Hodja, Ibn Khaldun and Shakespeare to argue for the importance of the soul, and they are sent to the world to show the people the way. One of Nasreddin's avatars on earth is shown to be a Turkish diplomat in London. We see him in conversation with his friend from Oxford days, 'Şeyk'- Shakespeare's avatar- and it reads like a conversation she herself would want to have with her favourite playwright- Nasır, the diplomat, and Şeyk are shown to be perfect allies in their condemnation of aping contemporary Europe's 'soulless' ways. The description of the scene includes an 'impressionist' painting on the wall depicting Nasreddin Hodja. This detail echoes the Claire Price piece I have opened with: Price finds meaning in the fact that 'Instead of the traditional texts from the Koran- embroiderings in gold thread on green velvet […] there were such soundly Victorian pictures on her walls as adorn thousands of other London flats.' Both in this painting that she places in the idealized diplomat's room and the play in general, Halide Edib identifies Nasreddin Hodja as the heritage that she identifies most with.

Çalışlar quotes the diaries of her colleagues and students to give an account of this much-respected 'woman in a headscarf'[12] who used her classes to conduct discussions on liberalism and democracy rather than do a close reading of the texts, and was happiest when she received the answer 'There might be republic in France, but there is liberty in England' to her quizzing of the students (Çalışlar 410). Halide Edib, of all the countries she visited, seems to have found a true ally in England's traditions of parliament, individualism and liberty, as someone who promoted the same both in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. In her column of 20th July 1939, she talks about the English psyche, once again acknowledging that generalizations about any nation is wrong. English literature and language continued to play host to her till the end of her days, and aware of her position as guest-reader she tried to do justice to both:

[11] It was published in English in 1953 by George Allen and Unwin Ltd

[12] Çalışlar quotes from Haldun Taner's 'En Yaman Kadınımız' (Our Most Remarkable Woman) *Milliyet*. 18 Jan 1964 'Even though they looked down on her scholarship they all knew well that [she] was above and beyond all of them having lived life in a particular area, having matured through struggles, having been in the very centre of events, having seen all manner of people and lands, and above all having discussed and thought about all these.' (410)

> I have lived long enough to understand that it is wrong to say of a nation, or even an individual, it is in their nature to do this or that. I have experienced much, and I have tried to judge what I saw not according to my heart's desire but to what they were in themselves. That is why I do no make any conjectures about the English. Still, if we should try to single out the one value that all of Englishness would think worth defending, including a couple of sincere English communists whom I got to know well, liberals, conservatives, socialists, in short, English people of all hues, it would have to be what they call the liberty of the individual, circumscribed though it may be.

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